

Claims

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

identifying target objects on an electronic storefront Web site to which customer traffic is to be targeted, wherein identifying the target objects includes ~~searching~~ performing a search for the target objects located in an electronic catalog separate from the electronic storefront Web site; automatically generating search keywords for the target objects that are identified and found by the search; and initiating purchase of the search keywords from one or more search partners.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving billing and keyword clickthrough data from the one or more search partners; and automatically determining a cost effectiveness of each of the keywords.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the cost effectiveness of each keyword is determined for each search partner on an individual search partner basis.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the cost effectiveness of each keyword is determined by:

calculating an average cost per click (CPC) value based on the billing and keyword clickthrough data received from the one or more search partners;

monitoring customer session activities initiated in response to each keyword clickthrough;

determining a margin per click (MPC) value comprising an average marginal profit for each customer session activity initiated by a keyword clickthrough for each keyword; and

comparing the MPC and CPC values for each keyword.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising automatically deactivating a keyword when it is determined to not be cost effective.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the CPC and MPC values are compared for each keyword at each of the one or more search partners.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein purchase of keywords is automatically initiated by electronically interfacing with the search partner to exchange data identifying the keywords to be purchased.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein identifying the target objects for which keywords are automatically generated is performed periodically by a target discovery process and comprises identifying any new target objects that have been added to the Web site since the last time the target discovery process was performed.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

 automatically generating formatted search result data corresponding to at least one keyword that is to be purchased; and

 sending the formatted search result data for said at least one keyword to at least one of the one or more search partners, and

 including the formatted search result data are in search results produced by said at least one of the one or more search partners in response to searches corresponding to said at least one keyword.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the formatted search result data is automatically generated by performing operations including:

 creating a plurality of formatted search result templates;

 selecting one of the plurality of formatted search result templates applicable for a given keyword and search partner; and

 filling in the formatted search result template with information corresponding to a catalog item for which a corresponding keyword was automatically generated.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the plurality of formatted search result templates includes templates that are particular to at least one of a product, a brand, and a product category.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein at least one formatted search result includes a destination URL containing embedded information identifying at least one of a product, brand, or category associated with the corresponding keyword.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein at least one formatted search result includes a price corresponding to a target object for which the keyword was automatically generated.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

identifying target objects that were previously targeted for customer traffic that are related to catalog items that are either discontinued or currently unavailable; and

deactivating the purchase of any keywords corresponding to the target objects that are so identified.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising:

identifying target objects corresponding to items in the electronic catalog that were previously unavailable but are now available; and

reactivating purchase of the keywords corresponding to those target objects.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the keywords are purchased from a search partner by sending a document to the search partner containing a list of keywords to be purchased along with bids for keywords.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the document comprises one of a spreadsheet, database table, or an XML (extended markup language) document.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

changing a purchase status of at least one of keyword with a search partner by electronically interfacing with the search partner via a Web service.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving search result data from a search partner identifying search terms used to retrieve search results containing links to target objects on the electronic storefront Web site; and

including those search terms as part of the search keywords that are purchased from the one or more partner sites.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the target objects include at least one of a product, brand, category, drug, and URL.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium having instructions stored thereon, which when executed perform operations comprising:

identifying target objects on an electronic storefront Web site to which customer traffic is to be targeted, wherein identifying the target objects includes ~~searching~~ performing a search for the target objects located in an electronic catalog separate from the electronic storefront Web site;

automatically generating search keywords for the target objects that are identified and found by the search; and

initiating purchase of the search keywords from one or more search partners.

23-39. (Canceled)